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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

*Memorandum*



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 0600  
16 February 1965

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Office of Current Intelligence  
16 February 1965

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam as of 0600 EST

Communist Military Developments

1. The first known Chinese Communist military reaction to the recent US air strikes has been to move additional jet fighters closer to the Sino-Vietnamese border. According to preliminary analysis of a 14 February US photo-reconnaissance mission, there are now 65 MIG 15/17 jet fighters at Mengtzu airbase which is about 60 miles from the border. This is an increase of 28--approximately a fighter regiment--over the number previously thought to be at this base.

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There is no other current photo-reconnaissance of neighboring air facilities, but it is probable that the aircraft were deployed to the forward jet fighter base at Mengtzu from other airfields in the immediate area, such as Kunming. In such an event, the Chinese can be expected to move in replacement aircraft from North China to fill the void left by the deployment.

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### Communist Political Developments

5. Soviet and Chinese propaganda continues to strike a threatening note in an attempt to deter further US actions while avoiding any specific commitments. At the same time, each country is attempting to improve its own position within the context of the Sino-Soviet conflict.

6. In an effort to undercut China's harshly critical independent role, Moscow has been stressing the need for unity in the face of "aggression," warning in a broadcast on 15 February that North Vietnam is a "member of the socialist community" which will not be left to stand alone in the event of "new raids" which it claims are being planned. Although "dire consequences" are predicted, they are left purposefully vague.

7. In a similarly strong sounding, but indefinite, message on 16 February to a preparatory meeting of the Indochinese Peoples conference now being held in Phnom Penh, Kosygin stated that "the Soviet Union resolutely demands the withdrawal of US troops... from South Vietnam, and the cessation of armed provocations against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia."

8. Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi, in a speech at a Soviet embassy reception in Peiping on 15 February celebrating the anniversary of the Sino-Soviet Friendship Treaty, attempted to goad the USSR into more forthright support for the Communist campaign in Vietnam. He declared that "concrete action" against

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the US is the duty of all socialist countries, called peaceful coexistence with the US "out of the question," and asserted that the Sino-Soviet alliance can be "tested and tempered" only in a "tit-for-tat struggle against imperialism."

9. Chen implies that unless the Soviets are willing to join the Chinese in active support for North Vietnam, the treaty is only a "scrap of paper." Should Moscow accede to the Chinese, and probably North Vietnamese, demands, it will risk a confrontation with the US; should it fail to respond, the Chinese will undoubtedly play up Soviet reluctance as additional evidence that the Soviets are "untrustworthy cowards."

10. North Vietnam's propaganda continues to reflect self-confidence and a decision to maintain an inflexible position.

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#### Viet Cong Activities

11. Scattered Viet Cong activity continues, but no major Communist actions have been reported. Unconfirmed press reports state that government troops yesterday fired on Viet Cong demonstrators who entered the capital of Quang Tin Province to protest local airstrikes; 40 persons reportedly were killed. The Viet Cong have organized such protests in the past, and, on at least one occasion, exchanged fire with government security forces.

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The government on 9 February began

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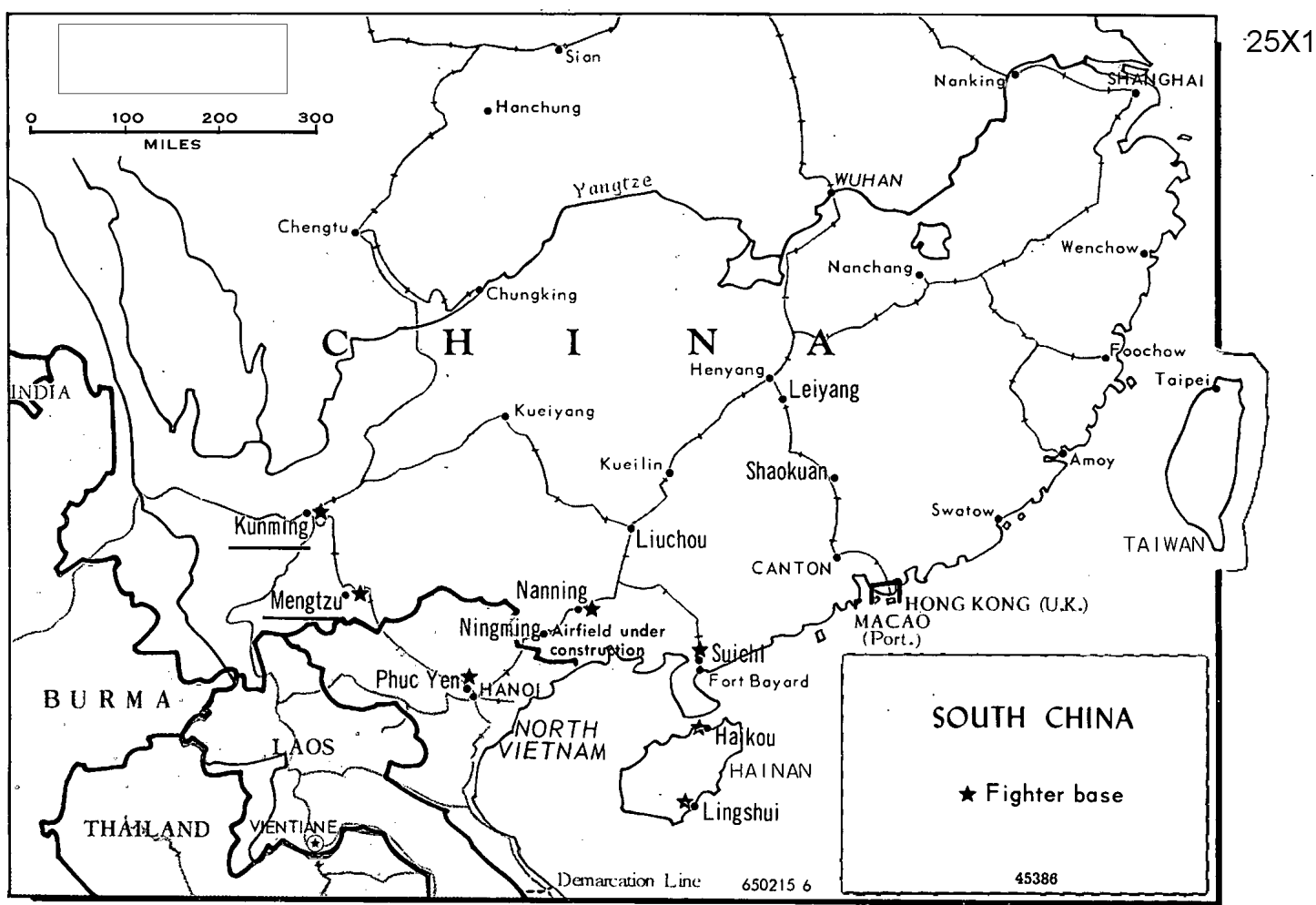
a major operation, as part of a two-month campaign to try to clear the province of major Communist forces, believed to be elements of two Viet Cong regiments, which entered Phuoc Tuy in the latter part of 1964. These forces were involved in the five-day battle around Binh Gia at the start of 1965.

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### Political Developments in South Vietnam

13. In a communique on 15 February the Armed Forces Council confirmed Phan Khac Suu as Chief of State and appointed Phan Huy Quat as Premier. The communique also reaffirmed the promise to convene a National Congress, but deferred any decisions as to the procedures or timing for the convocation of the Congress, or the duties it would carry out.

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